

ORM NEWS

From the Office of the
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Resolution Management
Department of Veterans Affairs



September 2004

From the Deputy Assistant Secretary



Our primary focus in FY 2004 has been meeting or exceeding our organizational performance goals. One of the most important is to reduce the time required to complete the investigation of each case within 180 days or less after formal filing.

We have made progress toward accomplishing this goal (see page 2) in addition to our other strategic goals of reducing our pending inventory, increasing the number of VA employees who are aware of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) as an option to address workplace disputes and increasing the number of cases using ADR.

Besides being a strategic goal for VA and ORM, completing investigations within 180 days also accomplishes an even greater goal of helping managers and employees return their full attention to serving our nations veterans. We do this by helping them to identify the causes of complaints and find solutions to these issues.

Reaching this goal is possible when we understand what we are attempting to do, have in place mechanisms and processes to accomplish the task, see ourselves as working towards a common goal and have an understanding of how what we do fits into VA's mission of providing high quality, prompt and seamless service to veterans.

While we have much to do, by focusing on our objectives we can continue to make significant progress, as we have in FY 2004, towards achieving this very important goal.

James S. Jones

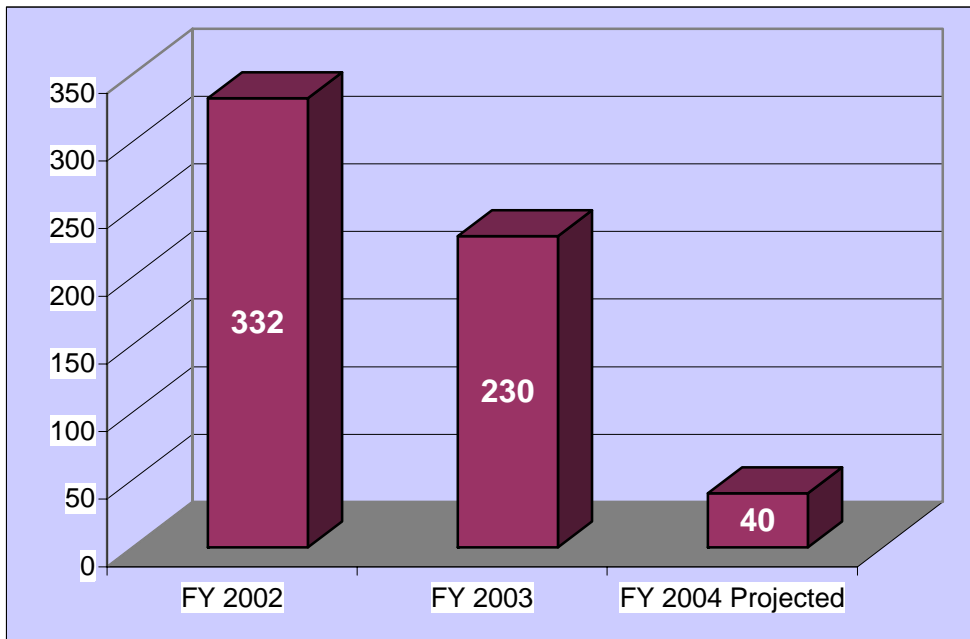
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Workload Snapshots

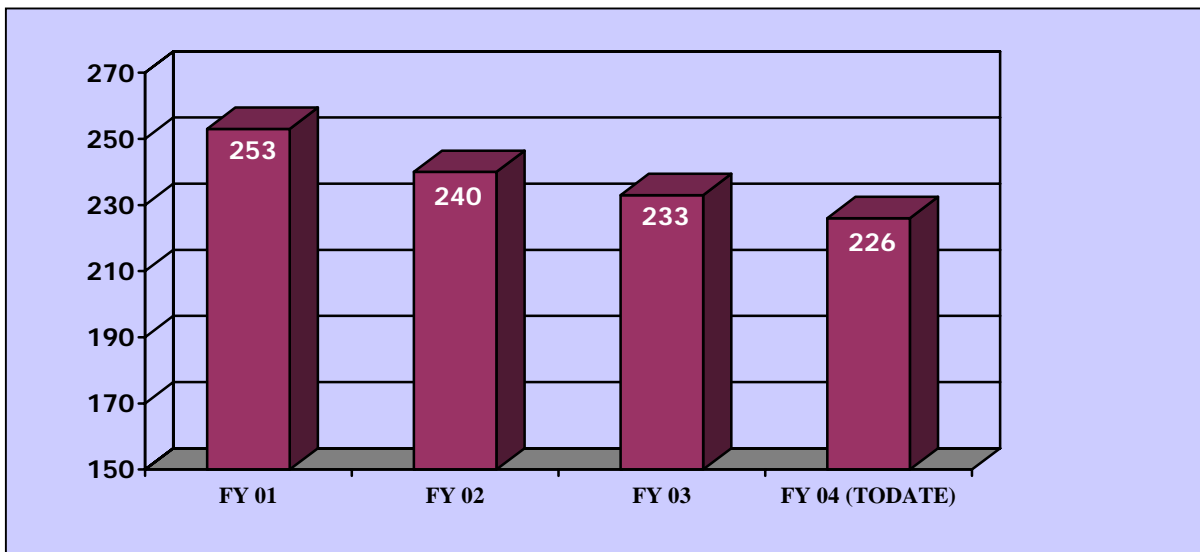
Cases Pending Over 180 Days

The chart below shows the projected reduction in the number of cases pending over 180 days at the end of FY 2004 based on current activities.



Average Processing Time for Investigations

This chart shows the continuing reduction in the average processing time for investigations.

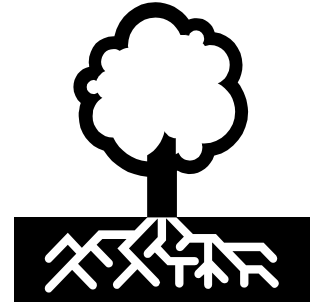


ROOT CAUSE TRAINING

Office of Policy and Compliance

The Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC) is in the processing of updating the Web Based Tracking System (WBTS) to include new root cause categories and began training field office staff on the use of these new categories September 8, 2004, with Western Operations.

EEO counselors have been advised to no longer use the root cause categories currently in the WBTS until further notice. We anticipate completing this training at all field offices no later than October 14th.



Below is the tentative on-site training schedule. Dates are subject to change.

**Western Operations
(Los Angeles Field Office)**

Wednesday, September 8, 2004

**Central Plains Operations
(Houston Field Office)**

Tuesday, September 14, 2004

**Mid-South Operations
(Little Rock Field Office)**

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

**Mid-Atlantic Operations
(Washington Field Office)**

Tuesday, September 21, 2004

**Southeastern Operations
(Bay Pines Field Office)**

**Tuesday or Wednesday,
October 5th or 6, 2004**

**Northeastern Operations
(Lyons Field Office)**

Tuesday October 12, 2004

**Great Lakes Operations
(Cleveland Field Office)**

Wednesday, October 13, 2004

For more information, contact OPC at (202) 501- 2680. ■

E-Mail Migration Project and Workstation Upgrade

Beginning in October 2004, VA has scheduled a department-wide upgrade, to include ORM, of all email accounts to Exchange 2003.

Under a new VA email policy, the mailboxes of all users will be limited in size to 250 megabytes. ORM currently has several users who exceed or are near this limit. These users must take steps to reduce the sizes of their existing accounts as soon as possible, but not later than September 30, 2004. *Any email boxes that exceed 250 megabytes at the time of the migration will not be transferred to Exchange 2003.* The ORM helpdesk will be available to assist these users.

In addition to the new VA-wide email policy, VA is also moving toward a standard shared email address for all employees. That shared address is **@va.gov**. As you know, ORM's current shared email address is **@orm.va.gov**. To ease the transition to this "new" shared email address, all *existing* ORM employees will have two email addresses: one will be **John.Doe@orm.va.gov** and the other will be **John.Doe@va.gov** address. All *new* ORM employees, however, will be assigned only a **firstname.lastname@va.gov** address.

We also have a second more immediate information technology initiative scheduled to be launched on September 21, 2004. This is the *Workstation Upgrade Project*. Under this project, all workstations and laptops, including non-Toshiba pool laptops, will be upgraded to Microsoft Office Suite 2003, Adobe Reader version 6, and the latest security and virus updates.

As we near the time scheduled for your upgrade installation, we plan to conduct "brown bag" luncheon VTC sessions with all users. We want these "open forums" to be an opportunity for users to raise any IT related question they may have. At the same time, we will be providing them with up-to-date information on this project as well as information on the *E-Mail Migration Project*.

Please note the following upgrade installation schedule.

Continued on the next page

Workstation Upgrade Schedule

<u>Site</u>	<u>Preliminary Install Dates</u>
Washington Field Office	09/21/04-09/24/04
Fayetteville Satellite Office	09/21/04-09/24/04
Policy & Compliance Office	09/27/04-10/01/04
DAS Office	09/27/04-10/01/04
COO Office	09/27/04-10/01/04
Lyons Field Office	10/04/04-10/06/04
New York Satellite Office	10/05/04-10/06/04
Pittsburgh Satellite Office	10/06/04-10/07/04
Lebanon Satellite Office	10/06/04-10/07/04
Bedford Satellite Office	10/07/04-10/08/04
Los Angeles Field Office	10/11/04-10/12/04
Long Beach Satellite Office	10/12/04-10/13/04
Sepulveda Satellite Office	10/12/04-10/13/04
Vancouver Field Office	10/13/04-10/14/04
Palo Alto Field Office	10/14/04-10/15/04
Bay Pines Field Office	10/18/04-10/20/04
Lake City Satellite Office	10/20/04-10/21/04
Murfreesboro Satellite	10/20/04-10/21/04
Miscellaneous	10/21/04-10/22/04
Little Rock Field Office	10/25/04-10/27/04
Houston Field Office	10/26/04-10/28/04
Leavenworth Field Office	10/27/04-10/29/04
Cleveland Field Office	11/01/04-11/03/04
Detroit Satellite Office	11/02/04-11/04/04
Policy & Compliance (Cleveland)	11/02/04-11/04/04
St. Louis Satellite Office	11/02/04-11/04/04
Hines Field Office	11/03/04-11/05/04



Office Notes



Improved Production – ORM investigator production reached an all-time high in August - **248** cases.

Southeastern Operations – **Daniel (Dan) Cuff**, EEO

Investigator, and **Thomas E. Allen, Sr.**, EEO Counselor, were recently honored with a certificate signed by the Secretary, a proclamation signed by the DAS for ORM and a plaque in recognition of the sacrifices they made when they answered the call to active duty in support of the nation.

Central Plains Operations – **Hwa-Soon (Sue) K. Thorson**, EEO

Investigator, Central Plains Operations, was named Investigator of the Month for August 2004 – completing 15 cases with an average processing time of 20.87 days. **Teresa Stein** successfully completed the USDA Executive Leadership Program.

Great Lakes Operations – **Tywanna Halstead**, Great Lakes Operations Regional EEO Officer, conducted training for an audience of 325 federal sector EEOC Judges, HR specialists, EEO attorneys and agency managers at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) EXCEL Conference, Aug. 2004. The subject of the presentation was “Best Practices in Managing EEO Complaint Processing.” Her session had the highest attendance of any session during the four-day conference.

Mid-South Operations – Community Involvement - The Little Rock ORM Field office collected school supplies for their adopted school Boone Park Elementary School for this upcoming school year. The staff donated paper, pencils, pens, crayons, glue and other school supplies and presented it to the school during the month of August. This is a yearly project for Little Rock ORM staff and is greatly appreciated by the students.

Anselm Beach, EEO Intake Specialist recently accepted a position with another branch of the Department of the Veterans Affairs. Mr. Beach's last day was August 20, 2004. **Ava'Maria Marshall**, EEO Counselor recently resigned from the Office of Resolution Management. Both were given farewell luncheons by the staff. Please join us in wishing Mr. Beach and Ms. Marshall success in their new endeavors. ■

Did You Know?

National Hispanic Heritage Month

VA proudly joins the Nation in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. This year's theme is "Hispanic Americans: Making a Difference in Our Community and Our Nation."

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. The observance was expanded in 1988 to a month-long celebration (Sept. 15-Oct. 15). During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries — Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively.

As the youngest and fastest-growing segment of our population, Hispanic Americans are an increasingly vital part of our nation's future. They have served our country with distinction and made important contributions in such areas as arts, business, academia, government, and the Armed Forces. For more information on Hispanic contributions to America's military, for example, visit the Hispanic Recipients of the Medal of Honor page at www.homeofheroes.com/e-books/mohE_hispanic/list.html.

ORM News is a monthly publication of the Office of Resolution Management. Contact Terry Washington, External Affairs Program, by e-mail or by calling (202) 501-2800 concerning the contents of this newsletter. Copies of this newsletter are available at <http://vaww.va.gov/orm>.